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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 04 ANKARA 002474

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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

FRIDAY, APRIL 29, 2005

THIS REPORT PRESENTS THE TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE THEMES:

HEADLINES  
BRIEFING  
EDITORIAL OPINION

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HEADLINES

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MASS APPEAL

US Report: PKK Aims to Establish 'Democratic' State - Hurriyet  
US 'Gaffe' in Terror Report - Milliyet  
Ankara Seeks 'Middle Way' in Relations With Yerevan - Sabah  
Rumsfeld to Saddam: Stop the Resistance and Go Free - Hurriyet  
New Iraqi Cabinet Approved - Sabah  
Iraqi Government 'Partially' Established - Milliyet  
Abbas Warns of Tough Retaliation for Cease-Fire Violation - Sabah  
85 Percent of Americans Find Press News 'Biased and Negative' - Aksam  
Britons Find Blair 'Charismatic' But 'Unreliable' - Aksam

OPINION MAKERS

Turkey-US Begin 'Bargaining' on Incirlik Airbase - Radikal  
US Issues 'Contradictory' Terror Report - Cumhuriyet  
Iraq's Neighbors to Meet in Istanbul Today - Cumhuriyet  
Al-Quds Al-Arabi: Rumsfeld Recently Met Saddam in Iraq - Cumhuriyet  
Rumsfeld Asks Saddam for Help in Halting Resistance - Yeni Safak  
Iraq's First Government Formed on Saddam's Birthday - Zaman  
Talabani Vetoes 5 Names in New Iraqi Cabinet - Yeni Safak  
EU Supports Caferi Government in Iraq - Yeni Safak  
US Discusses Dividing Iraq Into 6 States - Yeni Safak  
HRW: Despite Reforms, Torture Widespread in Turkey - Cumhuriyet  
Putin: Russian Weapons Pose No Threat to Israel - Zaman

BRIEFING

US, Turkey Kick Off Technical Talks on Incirlik Airbase:  
Turkey began technical talks with the United States regarding the US proposal to establish a logistical cargo hub at Incirlik Air Base for operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, Turkish media report. On Thursday, the Turks told the Americans that President Sezer will approve the related decree soon. Representative of the Turkish General Staff (TGS) and Foreign Ministry (MFA) attended yesterday's talks, in which technical details like flight plans, notification procedures, personnel, and inspection of cargo planes by the Turks were discussed. Turkish officials told the press that there are no plans to sign a new memorandum of understanding on the subject.

US State Department 2004 Country Report on Terrorism:  
Turkish dailies are critical of the Department of State's "Global Patterns of Terrorism" report for describing the PKK as an organization fighting 'to establish an independent, democratic Kurdish state in southeastern Turkey, northern Iraq and parts of Iran and Syria.' Papers view the Turkey chapter of the report as 'contradictory,' and claim that the US has made a 'gaffe' in describing PKK aims. An MFA source regarded the mention of 'democratic' goals for a terrorist organization as 'a contradiction,' "Yeni Safak" writes. The paper blames the US for extending 'covert' support to terrorism. "Radikal" focuses on parts of the report in which Turkey's support for the global war against terrorism is highlighted.  
Ankara Welcomes New Iraqi Government: The Turkish Foreign Ministry (MFA) said in a statement on Thursday that 'the formation of an elected Iraqi government constitutes a step forward to establish a democratic regime in Iraq.' Ankara wished success to the new Iraqi government, 'which will undertake important responsibilities in Iraq's political transition process.' The statement stressed that the time has come 'to reach a national compromise, heal the wounds,

and create a joint future for the Iraqi people.' Participation of all Iraqi groups in the writing of the new Iraqi constitution and acting in unity in solving problems Iraq may face in the future are very important, the MFA said, noting that Turkey will support all efforts to help Iraq reach stability.

**Iraq's Neighbors to Meet in Istanbul Today:** Iraq's neighbors are to gather in Istanbul Friday for their first meeting following the Iraqi general elections. Turkish prime Minister Erdogan and Foreign Minister Gul, representatives of the Arab League and Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), and the foreign ministers of Iraq, Iran, Syria, Egypt, Kuwait, Jordan and Bahrain will join the talks.

**Ankara Seeks a 'New Era' With Yerevan:** Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan said on Thursday that a political relationship could be established with Armenia while historians from the two countries examine the archives on what Armenians claim to be the 'genocide' of their kin by Ottoman forces during World War I. MFA officials told "Sabah" that 'positive elements' in a recent letter by Armenian President Robert Kocharian to Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan are being taken into account, and that a political decision will be conveyed to Yerevan. Ankara expects 'firm statements' from Yerevan indicating that Armenia has no territorial demands from Turkey. The border crossing between the two countries could be opened if Armenia stops pursuit of 'genocide' claims, say Turkish officials, noting that they are seeking a 'win-win' situation for both sides.

**Turkey, Israeli, Palestinian Businessmen Explore Cooperation:** Turkey's Union of Chambers (TOBB) said that Israeli and Palestinian businessmen met for the first time in Ankara, expressing a common will for cooperation. TOBB Chairman Rifat Hisarciklioglu held a joint press conference on Thursday with Shraga Brosh, president of the Manufacturers' Association of Israel, and Ahmad Hashim al-Zogheir, chairman of the Palestinian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, in which Hisarciklioglu announced the formation of the 'Ankara Forum for Economic Cooperation Among Palestine, Israel and Turkey.' Hisarciklioglu noted that Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan and Foreign Minister Gul supported the 'union' among the three countries. The groups will meet again in Jerusalem in the first half of June to discuss cooperation in tourism, industry, and agriculture. Brosh said that some good proposals, such as opening doors to Palestinians and facilitating their living conditions through trade with other countries, may be discussed at the June meetings. "Milliyet" expects Erdogan to raise the issues of restoration of the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem by TOBB and a possible Turkish contribution to the construction of Gaza Airport in Palestine during his weekend visit to the region.

**'Yarmulke' Issue in Erdogan's Israel Visit:** Israeli officials are concerned that Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan may not cover his head during a visit to Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, "Sabah" reports. Erdogan is scheduled to arrive in Israel on May 1 on a state visit. The Israelis are concerned that he may not cover his head at the Holocaust museum, out of fear that a Turkish prime minister seen in a yarmulke may anger his Islamic grassroots. Last month, Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul refused to cover his head during a visit to Yad Vashem.

#### EDITORIAL OPINION: US-Turkey

"The Grave Situation in Turkish-US Relations"  
Fatih Altayli argued in the mass appeal "Hurriyet" (4/29): "Visiting the US to check the pulse on Turkish-American ties led me to an important conclusion. The situation is more grave than widely believed in Turkey. The seriousness of the problem cannot be explained by reducing it to a few anti-Turkish articles in the American media or a few television shows that portray Turkey in a negative light. Criticism of Turkey is being expressed by all groups at every opportunity. Television channels watched by a predominantly Muslim audience are constantly talking about the lack of religious freedom in Turkey. Others are criticizing Turkey for more general violations of human rights. Even the man in the street is aware of Turkey, and not in a positive sense. Robert Pollock, the writer of the well-known article on Turkey, says he likes Turkey a lot. Regarding his 'ugly depiction' of the country in "The Wall Street Journal," he argues that 'there is a problem that everybody was ignoring, most particularly the Turkish side. I wanted to bring this up. I highlighted the problem and diagnosed it. Now it is time to correct the problem, and I am on Turkey's side in this process.' . Nevertheless it seems that the healing process will not be that easy. Prime Minister Erdogan is planning a visit to the US in June, but President Bush is apparently reluctant to give him an appointment. Turkish MFA Undersecretary Tuygan made a recent visit to Washington,

but failed to make progress on this issue -- another indication of Washington's disappointment. Here in the US everybody considers the upcoming Turkish PM's visit to Israel as an important step toward the normalization of bilateral ties. According to some influential names in the Washington administration, the crisis in Turkish-American ties is not only about the relationship, but also about the broader international picture. They believe that Turkey has to redefine its ties with the US. They say that Turkey should abandon the definition of strategic partnership that rests solely on Turkey's geo-strategic location. That factor is no longer very important. Turkey should have a different and deeper type of cooperation with the US. It seems that Turkish-American relations will have a different dimension in the period to come. Whether that change will be negative or positive will be for Turkey to decide."

"From Anti-Americanism to Official Americanism"  
Cengiz Candar observed in the conservative-sensational "Dunden Bugune Tercuman" (4/29): "I think it has been noticed by everyone that Ankara has turned its course more toward Washington an away from Brussels. The first signals of this came from thw Deputy Chief of Staff at a TGS press briefing in January. This course became clearer with the remarks of TGS Chief General Ozkok last week. On the same day General Ozkok spoke, the amendment for Incirlik, which had been held up in the Prime Minister's office, was presented to the Council of Ministers for approval. It seems that the US got everything it requested from Turkey on the Incirlik issue. Then, at the AKP group meeting, PM Erdogan praise for the US was the top item on the agenda. When Erdogan was received in the White House for the first time, he was neither a Prime Minister nor a parliamentarian. Until that time, such a privilege was only given to real strategic partners of the US - the UK and Israel. Unfortunately, the AKP government didn't perceive that, and instead chose to surf the growing wave of 'anti-Americanism.' Now PM Erdogan, is sending positive signals to Washington. Will the doors of the White House be opened for him when he is there in May or June? He has been knocking on that door for quite some time now. The door that was opened for him in December 2002 with just a wave of the hand has not been opened even a crack so far this time. The likelihood of Erdogan eventually being received at the White House remain quite high. But the White House seems determined to make Prime Minister sweat a little bit before opening the door."

EDELMAN